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AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

ON

MIDWIFERY,

COMPRISING A

CRITICAL, HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL DISQUISITION,

ON THAT

Branch of Medical Science :

*Delivered February 7th, 1831, at the School of Medicine
in Liverpool,*

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INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

GENTLEMEN,

ESTABLISHED custom requires, that previous to commencing the exposition of a subject connected with science or art, a sufficient historical account of it shall be given, to enable the student to form some accurate general ideas of its origin, and the manner of its advancement to the state in which it is found at the present time. It is this preliminary measure which it is now proposed to fulfil with regard to Midwifery—a term, which in its ordinary acceptation, is held to denote a link only of the extensive chain of occurrences, which fall peculiarly within the notice of the obstetric teacher and practitioner; for if the just definition of this important branch of medical science be, that it is the amount of our information relative to the perpetuation of the human species,* it will at once appear how comprehensive must be the studies belonging to it, and how wide a field of inquiry it opens to the philosophic mind. Nor can it be less evident, from its connexion with the subject of population, that a knowledge of its doctrines and resources is worthy the attention of the politician and economist; and, from its being conversant with the concomitant circumstances of procreation, or the destruction of the human offspring, that a strict alliance obtains between it and some of the most usual and difficult points, which it is the office of the medical jurist to investigate.

* Velpeau.

It is then a self-evident proposition, that the art of midwifery took its rise, and is coeval with the existence of mankind; to assign it any other origin, or to institute an inquiry into the date of its origin, would be equally absurd. The parturient process, in its liability to morbid interruption and dangerous complication, must have been essentially the same in all ages and countries from the beginning of the world; an assertion in proof of which, besides the convincing arguments deducible from the structure of the human frame, we may adduce the positive declaration of the Deity to the first woman, that in sorrow she should bring forth children.

In tracing the progress of midwifery from the creation of the world down to the present day, the sacred writings, as being both absolutely and relatively the most ancient documents in existence, come first to be consulted. The information supplied from these records is, as might be expected, from its being only contingent, scanty and imperfect, and consists in not more than several incidental allusions. The earliest reference made to the subject of midwifery is in the 35th chapter of Genesis, where we learn that Rachel, the wife of Jacob, died in giving birth to a son, although assured by the midwife that she need not fear. The second allusion is contained in the latter verses of the 38th chapter of the same book, and presents the description of a rare occurrence in the practice of midwifery. It is a case of twins, and one of them presenting by the arm, on which, to distinguish it as belonging to the first born, the midwife tied a scarlet thread; but the arm afterwards receded—the second child came down, and was eventually expelled first. From the next passage, which is part of the first chapter of Exodus, we learn that the Hebrew women were accustomed to be delivered sitting on stools, and that probably their labours were quickly terminated. It is to be noted that this circumstance is one of probability only, for though the midwives declared to king Pharaoh, by whom they had been commanded to kill all the male children, that the Hebrew women were not as the Egyptian women, inasmuch as they were lively, and delivered ere the midwives came in unto

them ; yet when we recollect that the declaration was urged in defence and extenuation of their not having complied with his cruel commands, it is not incumbent on us to attach truth to its literal and direct interpretation. A fourth testimony, relating to the obstetric art among the Hebrew people, exists in the fourth chapter of the first book of Samuel, where we are informed, that through grief, premature labour, terminating fatally, was brought on in the wife of Phinehas, the high priest's son. The same consolatory remark of fear was not applied to her by the midwives, as in the other fatal case, and from the construction of the sentence, may be as reasonably deemed a customary form of congratulation on the occasion of a birth under any circumstances, as an indication of ignorance in misapprehension of danger. The last citation from the holy writings to which allusion must be made, refers to the treatment of the umbilical cord, the division of which, termed omphalotomy, was, without doubt, the first surgical operation performed, and may challenge the records of pure medicine for an instance of equal antiquity. Much futile, vain discussion, even among estimable authors, has taken place as to what was the management of the umbilical cord of the first infant Cain, but it is not my intention to occupy your time by the relation of their frivolities. It is at the beginning of the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel, where we read of the comparison of Jerusalem to a wretched infant, whose navel was declared to be uncut on the day of its nativity, that the first express mention of omphalotomy occurs ; and the inference drawn from it has been, that the Jews were in the habit of dividing, but not of placing, a ligature on the cord. This may have been the case, but the point is an inconsequential one ; and it appears from the simultaneous mention of salting and swaddling, that if the cord was not secured by tying, at least other means were had recourse to for stopping the effusion of blood. Since also Ezekiel wrote in the year of the world 3840, at a time when the Jews had been in frequent and durable intercourse with other nations, it cannot be

more than probable that section, though then in use, was the mode of separation that had been employed from the beginning.

Nothing of particular interest is made known to us by these passages, excepting that midwives seem to have been uniformly engaged in obstetric practice among the Hebrews, and that the assistance of men was never demanded, perhaps even not for a moment imagined. Such at least is the natural and legitimate conclusion to be derived from the fact, that male practitioners are never alluded to, either in the Old Testament, or in the writings of the Jewish historian, Josephus ; but there are not, on the other hand, wanting either writers or reasons inclining us to admit, that from a certain period of their national existence and in perilous labours, the Hebrews did resort to the aid which professors of the healing art could alone be supposed capable of affording. It must be confessed, however, that the belief is entirely conjectural, and rests on slender grounds. There is a passage in Herodotus, giving presumption to suppose that the eastern nations had recourse to the assistance of the physicians in the difficult labours of their women. Now, it was by these eastern people that the Jews were for so long a time held in captivity, and as conquerors have generally imposed their laws and customs on the vanquished, and moreover as constant intercourse between nations (not to mention the temporary assimilation which happened in the case under consideration) is known to induce the adoption of similar manners and usages, it is inferred that the Jewish people, from the time of their return from the second or Babylonian captivity, to that of their dispersion over the world, did, among other institutions of their conquerors, imitate that of employing male practitioners in all cases of difficult or impeded parturition.

From the consideration of the state of midwifery among the Jews, let us pass to that of its condition among the next most ancient people, the Egyptians. In the absence of direct testimony, it is only by reasoning on the few facts that we possess bearing on

the question, that any conclusion can be arrived at; and even then it is not entirely satisfactory or decisive. All that can be affirmed is, that there is a high probability that the profession of accoucheur was not unknown to the Egyptians; for, in the first place, Herodotus distinctly states, that there was a subdivision of labour in the medical profession among them—that individuals attached themselves to the treatment of particular classes of maladies, or the affections of particular organs, whence there were oculists, dentists, aurists, chiropodists, &c.—in the next, the Egyptians are known, by the monuments and relics which they have left behind them, as well as by the testimonies of the earliest profane historians, to have been a highly ingenious, inventive, and wise people;—and lastly, they had continual commerce with the Greeks, who, as will be presently mentioned, did employ accoucheurs during at least some periods of their history, and in the more cultivated states. From this combination of facts,—that other branches of the art of medicine were distinctly exercised; that the people were learned, polished and sagacious; and from their frequent communication with a country in which they could see and observe the good effects resulting from the practice being in the hands of men, it does, I think, become very probable, and it is not a mark of credulity to believe, that among the Egyptians the office of accoucheur was known, and recognized as a distinct branch of medical pursuit.

The Greek and Roman authors occupy the next place, in a picture of the progress of the obstetric art. At this era we first obtain authentic and often copious details of its practice, and are enabled to treat the subject altogether with more certainty and in the exact order of time. The origin of all medical knowledge, its separation from a superstitious philosophy, and its establishment as an independent science, depending for extension of its boundaries on exact observation, faithful induction, and ingenious experiment, are to be dated from the epoch of these classic writers, who as they are the first we are acquainted with in respect to their antiquity, seem also to have been more accurate observers than any who have succeeded

them. As the notice of their opinions must necessarily be tedious, and yet cannot be dispensed with, I will commence their brief consideration without further introductory remark; and in the first place, with those of the prince and father of medicine, Hippocrates, who was born in the Island of Cos in the Archipelago, and flourished and practised in different parts of Greece in the fifth century preceding the Christian era. Among the writings of this great man which have descended to us, there are four books on obstetric subjects, which are respectively entitled *de nature pueri*, *de morbis mulierum*, *de exsecutione fœtus mortui*, and *de superfætatione*; these being the earliest express records of midwifery which are known, their venerable author is rightly considered and termed the father of midwifery, as well as of physic. It is immaterial to the purpose to settle the contested point whether or not Hippocrates practised midwifery; his precepts and observations alone claim our attention, and if he did not, as is commonly supposed, actually officiate during parturition, he yet displays an extraordinary and intimate acquaintance with the details, both of the process and of its remedial or guardian art. His opinions on the particular branch of medicine we are considering present the same compound of sagacity and superstition, of justness and error, which are so conspicuous throughout his whole writings; but, as far as relates to the mechanical management of labours, the erroneous views and directions greatly predominate. Thus, the only presentation of the infant by which delivery should ever be attempted he considers to be that of the head, and into it he directs all other presentations to be if possible converted. Presentations of the lower extremities he says are dangerous, and generally fatal to the mother or infant, or to both; and in nearly the same terms transverse positions of the child are spoken of, being ingeniously likened to an olive impacted and lying across the neck of a narrow-mouthed flask. Embryotomy, or the extraction of the child piece-meal, he directs to be performed whenever it is so swollen that it cannot pass, or the malpresentation cannot be altered. In both these cases Hippocrates thought the child must be dead, and his directions to have recourse

to embryotomy seem to refer therefore to dead children only, who, according to the belief then prevalent, could not be born unassisted, inasmuch as it was considered that the act of parturition was constituted by the voluntary efforts of the fœtus seeking its way into the world. But when we recollect how uncertain and fallacious the signs indicating the death of the fœtus are, it may be fairly enough supposed, that embryotomy, performed in all cases either of great swelling or ineducible wrong position, was as frequently the means of destroying living, as of extracting dead children. The instruments described as proper for the operation are six in number, and are variously intended to cut, comminute, and extract. The management of the placenta after the plan recommended by him, would be now considered not less improper than adherence to his precepts for conducting the birth of the child. Its removal, he said, was to be accomplished immediately after the expulsion of the child, and the methods of effecting this which he advises are, making forcible straining efforts with the breath retained, the administration of sternutatories and a farrago of stimulant emenagogues, raising the bed from its head, so that the weight of the fœtus might drag downwards, placing the woman on a high stool and attaching weights to the umbilical cord; or, if the child should be dead, allowing it to depend from the parts, but to rest at the same time on the surface of new wool or bladders filled with water and spread over with wool, by the puncture of which with needles the water would be gradually evacuated, and the infant subside slowly, so as to exert an equable and not too violent degree of traction. Notwithstanding the absurdity and danger of many of the practices of Hippocrates in the conduct of labours, he has left us some unequivocal memorials of his accuracy and exactness of observation. Such are the remarks that too early rupture of the membranes protracts the duration of labour—that venesection is useful in lingering labours when the habit of the patient is full—that implication of the funis about the neck or shoulders of the infant frequently destroys its vitality—and that in uterine hæmorrhage the application of cold water to the abdomen by affusion, cloths or sponges, and the plugging of the vagina, are essential means of checking it.

Of Aristotle, who was born at Stagyra, 384 years before Christ, and was tutor to Alexander the Great, it will not be necessary to say much. He has written little or nothing on the practice of midwifery, but in his *Historia Animalium*, has treated very profusely on conception and generation. Some of his opinions are substantially correct, but the greater number of them are crude, hypothetical and superstitious.

About 480 years after Hippocrates, or A. D. 35, Celsus flourished at Rome, and is the first author after the father of physic, who, as far as we know, has written on medicine, or given any directions on obstetric subjects. Though for the most part a copyist of Hippocrates, Celsus has modified and deviated from his precepts in several important particulars. He advises that the feet of the child should be brought down in those cases of transverse presentation where they can be more readily seized than the head, and observes that extraction by the feet can be effected without much difficulty. Celsus gives judicious directions for dilating the os uteri when requisite, for conducting the extraction of the placenta, and for performing embryotomy. In describing the proper modes of using the crotchet or hook (two kinds of which he describes) he notices that convulsions and imminent danger are produced by the slipping of the instrument, so as to lacerate the contiguous parts of the mother.

Moschion is the author to be next mentioned. He wrote in Greek expressly on the diseases of women, but at what time is uncertain. Some have considered that he lived before the commencement of the Christian era, while others having assigned him a date so low as some part of the third century. It is however probable that he did not write till after the period of Celsus, and it is nearly certain that his was the first book written specially on midwifery. The only other work which contests the honour of priority with it, is that *de utero et pudendo muliebri* of Soranus Ephesion, a writer who lived in the reigns of Trajan and Adrian, in the second century. Moschion ventures to recommend delivery by the feet with less reserve than Celsus, though he is by no means to be considered the originator of the operation of turning under the circumstances which in this

country are now universally held to demand its performance, for with the exception of knee and breech presentations, he first attempted to reduce all others to that of the head, before resorting to extraction by the feet. And this plan is now adopted and recommended by several professors in Germany and France.* Moschion speaks of parturition rendered difficult by disease and deformity of the infant's body, by presentation of the head in a wrong position, and by obliquities of the uterus; from which it appears that he must have been an able and experienced accoucheur. Among those which would in the present day be considered bad practices, the worst perhaps was that which he advocated, of assisting delivery as soon as the head of the infant is protruded into the world, by grasping it and employing lateral tractive motion—a custom even now too prevalent among female practitioners, and a fertile source of that irregular action of the uterus, which produces the hour-glass contraction.†

Pliny, who was destroyed through his imprudent curiosity during the great eruption of Mount Vesuvius in the first century, is here mentioned, not because he was a physician, or said any thing new on obstetric subjects, but from his stating among his paraphrases or copyings of the writers on midwifery who preceded him, that from the circumstance of children presenting by the feet being so seldom, or with so much difficulty born alive, they were called by the name of Agrippæ, as if *ægre parti*. Hence Pliny thought that such positions should be always rectified.

The medical writer next following Moschion, or perhaps his contemporary or predecessor, is Galen, who lived about 600 years after Hippocrates, and is principally famous for his diffuse commentaries on his great master's works. Galen makes some excellent remarks on the diseases of women and children and has the reputation of

* Flamant, Ossiander, Siebold and others.

† Moschion has likewise given us a description of the chair or stool which was employed by the ancients in parturition, which he says is like a barber's stool, having a lunar-shaped foramen cut in it, for the fetus to fall through.

being the discoverer of the Fallopian tubes ; but he achieved nothing worthy of notice in the art of midwifery.

Towards the termination of the fourth, or, according to some, of the fifth century, *Ætius* a Greek, and the first Christian physician of whom we have any knowledge, flourished in high repute at Alexandria. He is a voluminous but not an original writer on midwifery, confessing candidly that he has compiled from the works of his predecessors ; and indeed, it is principally because he makes us acquainted with the modes of practice of otherwise unknown obstetric professors—particularly of the noted midwife *Aspasia*, and of *Philumenus*—that his writings are interesting. *Ætius* treated uterine hæmorrhage by styptic injections, astringent pessaries, and ligatures round the limbs ; makes a distinction of head presentations into natural, when it descends straight forwards, and præternatural, when it is turned to the right or left side of the uterus ; alludes to, without minutely describing a dilator somewhat analogous to the modern speculum, and dissents from *Hippocrates*, holding similar opinions to those of *Celsus* and *Moschion*, with respect to pedal presentations and delivery. From *Aspasia*, who is supposed to have lived before the time of *Hippocrates*, and to have been the mistress of several Persian monarchs, *Ætius* cites very precise means for remedying obliquities of the uterus, and presents us with a copious list of substances for causing sterility or abortion, besides minute directions for the management of puerperal women. Of *Philumenus*, it is reported that he always in cases of locked head, endeavoured to turn before resorting to the performance of embryotomy—that one of the instruments employed by him in this operation was a forceps, armed with teeth for comminuting and extracting portions of bone—and that in adhesions of the placenta to the surface of the uterus, he attempted the separation, not by the forcible violent means then usually had recourse to, but by gentle efforts exerted in a lateral, rather than a straight direction, in order that there might be no risk of producing what he calls a prolapsus, but what would undoubtedly have been an inversion of the uterus.

Paulus Aginata follows next in chronological order to Ætius, and is the last of the Greek medical authors whose works have descended to us, but it is neither known where he flourished nor whether he lived in the fourth or seventh century. Dr. Friend inclines to the latter epoch, and to place his residence at Alexandria, since learning and learned men were already at that period banished from Europe; while Le Clere considers that it was in the fourth century that he wrote, and if so, it probably was from the eastern part of Europe. He was the first man to whom an appellation corresponding to our modern term *accoucheur* was applied—the Arabians calling him *vir obstetrix*, or *obstetricus*, but there is little doubt that others who preceded him merited the name equally well, though never given to or assumed by them. The writings of Paulus are for the most part transcripts from the works of his predecessors, and it is not therefore surprising to find that they are contradictory or inconsistent. From this circumstance also, he has been pronounced by some as a sagacious practitioner, while by others he has been denounced as rash and injudicious; and, seeing that he advises the lower extremities of an infant to be amputated when they cannot be returned into the uterus, it would appear that the latter party are in the right.

It will be convenient to pause in this place for the purpose of taking a review of the state of the art in general among the ancients, and in particular with reference to its practitioners and professors. The concurrent testimony and allusions of all the old authors render it indisputable, that women were in the commencement the chief, if not the sole practitioners in midwifery, and that they likewise exerted the privilege of treating the diseases peculiar to their sex, as well during the pregnant and puerperal states, as at other times. Those persons therefore, who in the present day, raise an outcry against the employment of male practitioners, and are so fond of appealing to the customs and usages of the ancients for confirmation of the propriety of their opinions, should extend their objections to the management, and, if themselves physicians or surgeons, should be prepared to relinquish the treatment of the diseases of females under

any circumstances or conditions, for by doing so they would be enabled to fulfil, without at all exceeding the desires and directions of the people, whose usages they adduce. Peculiar names, indicative of their occupation and duties, were appropriated to the ancient midwives, answering to the terms grandmother,* female physician, and cutters of the naval string in our own language. That they were held in considerable estimation seems probable from Socrates proclaiming, with evident satisfaction, that he was the son of one, called *Phainareta*, whom he terms “*gencrosa et gravis obstetrix*,” and from the circumstance of another having obtained the name of *Sotira* — “*salvatrix or conservatrix*,” from the felicitous success of her practice. The sister of the doubting philosopher Pyrrho seems likewise to have been a midwife. Besides superintending the process of parturition, it was a part of their office to negotiate and assort marriages, and to teach their employers, as we learn from Plato, the art of procreating beautiful and healthy offspring; and they were further in the habit of administering medicines to produce sterility or abortion, and were believed to have the power of controlling or exciting labour pains, and of preventing, as well as inducing abortion by their medicines and charms. A famous practitioner among these time-honoured matrons both for alleviating disease and for the invention of receipts and cosmetics, was a certain Cleopatra, whom some of the older writers, in their zeal for the honor of the art, have endeavoured to identify with the voluptuous queen of Egypt; but their assumptions do not rest on a better foundation than that a treatise on so mercetricious a subject as the care of the complexion might naturally be expected from one who had so repeatedly profited by her personal charms. Their readiness to provoke miscarriage at the will and convenience of their mistresses does not, however, appear to have been universal, for Pliny relates that Laïs (not the renowned courtesan of that name, but a highly respectable midwife of Athens) strenuously

* *Μαιαί, ιατρομαίαι, ιατρίναι, εμψαλόθμοι*

opposed what she thought so unnatural and impious a practice, and presented in that laudable respect a remarkable contrast with an eminent rival, named Elephantis. That the custom very generally prevailed may be reasonably inferred from the precautions which we find to have been specially directed against it; thus Hippocrates, in the oath which he obliged all who became his disciples to take, expressly condemns and exacts from them by its solemnity, the declaration that they will never be guilty of attempts to frustrate the designs of nature in this respect. Yet the venerable patriarch of our profession confesses that he did on one occasion designedly cause a singing girl to miscarry, an action that forms an unfortunate commentary on his rigorous precept; but which it is customary to reconcile, by considering that he spoke in one instance as a philosopher, contemplating in the practice only an outrage and offence against the laws of nature, and acted in the other as a citizen of the world, in which capacity the deed might be justified to him by the prevailing practice and notions of others. But to return from this digression.—Of the particularities of practice of these midwives we have had transmitted to us little or no direct account, the only circumstance being that mentioned and approved by Aristotle, that before tying the umbilical cord they were accustomed to compress and urge the blood of its vessels into the abdomen of the fœtus, with the view of rendering it vigorous and strong. But were it worth the task, it would not be difficult to accumulate a sufficiency of circumstantial evidence to shew that their proceedings were often reprehensible and dangerous. Some testimony of this kind will be presently afforded. Hysteria was one of the affections which they were more frequently called upon to treat than others,* and indeed received its name from them; and we know that the relation of the etymology of the term to the cause of the complaint is for the most part well founded and correct. But though estimated

* Martial alludes to this circumstance in lib. i. of his Epigrams.

Hystericam vetulo se dixerat esse marito :

Protinus accedunt medici, medicæque recedunt.

from necessity, and prescribing from custom and prejudice for the accidents and disorders incidental to their sex, the midwives of Greece and Rome were not distinguished for sagacity or good behaviour; for we find Soerates likening himself to them in being barren or destitute of wisdom, and Terence not disguising the fact that they were addicted to wine, rash, and not worthy of being entrusted with the important charge of at least a first confinement.

Sane pol illa temulenta est mulier et temeraria :

Nec satis digna, cui committas primo partu mulierem.

Andriæ, Act 1

Yet there is every reason to believe that the ordinary practice of the art was in Greece, with a transient interruption, and throughout the Roman empire, from its commencement to its termination in the west, entirely in their hands; and that male practitioners, who were the regular medical men, were looked upon as referees in extraordinary and difficult cases, and summoned only when the ability and strength of the midwife were inadequate to effect delivery. And it may be stated by anticipation, of the Arabians, the subjects of the eastern empire, and of the Europeans in general during the dark ages, that similar usages obtained amongst them.

In proof of such having been the case, we have, as far as male practitioners are concerned, the direct testimony of their writings, evincing a knowledge of the subject that could be derived only from experience;—the nature of the operations so frequently described, which, it may be safely supposed have always demanded more anatomical skill, and physical, as well as moral resolution, than females can in general have possessed;—and the fact that the instruments employed were inventions of men, and so not likely to be resigned altogether to the use of women. There are these positive and negative proofs that medical men were always engaged in the practice of midwifery, in cases of doubt and emergency; while that females were previously and commonly employed, is abundantly evident also from their writings, and from the allusions contained in

the works of the physicians, historians, poets, and philosophers, who were their contemporaries; and moreover, would have been a natural and legitimate inference *à priori*, when the low ebb at which human knowledge comparatively stood, the state of society, and the circumstance that preceding and foreign people had principally employed women, were taken into account. In addition to the confirmations already given, may be mentioned the incident recorded by Suetonius concerning Livia, the wife of the emperor Augustus, to whom, after she had suffered a long time from lingering labour, the court physician, Antonius Musa, was called for the express purpose of hastening her delivery—"pro partu accelerando," are the words used by the historian. That it was always the physician or surgeon (for the distinction of office in the profession was not in those times established) who was called upon in cases baffling female skill, is clear, from the term "*medicus*," always used by Celsus, to denote the individual to whom his directions were intended to apply.

I said that in Greece the fair sex did not maintain their monopoly of midwifery practice uninterruptedly, and I now proceed to relate the occurrences connected with the suspension of their functions, as described by Hyginus, who wrote about the commencement of the Christian era. For some reason which does not appear, probably on account of the impoverishment of the state of its subjects in consequence of the inefficacy and unskilfulness of the midwives, the Athenians—that ingenious and polished people, whose name, even in the present day, is held to be typical of all that is elegant, intellectual and refined—enacted a law, prohibiting females and slaves from studying or practising any of the branches of medicine, among which midwifery was of course included. The direct tendency of this edict was to throw all the obstetric practice into the hands of men, or to deprive women of all assistance during parturition. Reduced to this alternative, many Athenian ladies (such was their high, but mistaken sense of modesty) preferred to perish in giving birth to their offspring, rather than admit the succour of male

practitioners. In consequence of this unfortunate state of things, and moved either by motives of sympathy or cupidity, a young female named Agnodice, was led, after removing her hair and assuming male attire, to attend the lessons of an obstetric teacher, Hierophilus, in order that she might gain sufficient skill to administer to the sufferings of her sex, in their hour of travail and difficulty. So extensively was she sought after, that the accoucheurs, finding their interests to be greatly injured, and suspecting something to be wrong, caused her to be charged before the areopagus, with being an eunuch and corrupting men's wives. Brought to trial on this accusation, she discovered her sex to the court, on which the accoucheurs became still more virulent and urgent for her punishment, and this would no doubt have been severe, but for the intervention of the most distinguished ladies of the city, who pleaded so eloquently and pertinently in her behalf, that she was not only liberated, but the obnoxious law was also rescinded, and free permission thenceforth given to females, both to practise the obstetric art, and to treat all the diseases peculiar to the female constitution. After this time, the male and female practitioners acted concurrently, the former being consulted in all probability only when their services were indispensably required.

The state of midwifery among the Greeks and Romans having thus been considered, let us transport our imaginations to its condition among their successors in science and literature, the Arabians; for after the repeated irruptions of the northern hordes upon the fair and fertile regions of the south during the third and following centuries, the lights of learning and knowledge were soon extinguished in the west of Europe. It was then that the Goth and the Vandal vied with each other in the work of devastation and destruction, and the monuments of ancient glory and art were pitilessly defaced and consigned to ruin, that the Huns emulated their sacrilegious and ferocious deeds, and that all the barbarians conspired to sweep away every vestige of intelligence and trace of human dignity from the face of the earth. The mental darkness in which Europe remained plunged

for 1000 years followed ; and as long as it continued, the grossest ignorance and superstition universally prevailed, and entire check was given to the cultivation of art or science of any kind. The mists which enveloped the human mind, and clouded all the operations of reason during this fearful and eventful period, were but too prolific in engendering errors and evils, that have scarcely yet passed away. But these mournful consequences must gradually vanish before the dawn of true wisdom and philosophy, and will at length be irrevocably dissipated by the piercing and radiant beams of that heaven-born knowledge, which aims at uniting mankind in firm and fraternal bonds of harmony and love.

The progress of mental cultivation, though arrested in the western parts of Europe by the overthrow of the empire, was not so completely suspended in the east, where the arts still continued to flourish, though languidly and feebly, and to receive the countenance, in some measure, of the Greek emperors, but in a more zealous degree of the Arabian caliphs. It was about the year 640, that the Saracens, in overrunning Egypt, obtained possession of the books in the Alexandrine library, all of which they took care to consume, with the exception of those on medicine, from which they probably expected to derive some advantage, and accordingly preserved. These were carried away and translated into the Arabic tongue, or at least, were copiously copied and borrowed from by those Arabian physicians whose writings have reached us.

Of these paraphrasing authors, the earliest, Serapion, says nothing worthy of repetition.

The next, Rhazes, who flourished at Bagdat towards the end of the ninth century, and gave the first description of small-pox, notices that in premature parturition the crural presentation is most common.

Avicenna lived about A. D. 1000, and treats in detail of midwifery and the diseases of females. In the management of protracted natural labour, by which a vertex presentation was implied, he first directs assistance to be afforded by the hand—if that is unavailing, by the application of a fillet or tape—if the additional power thus obtained does not suffice, forceps are to be used, instru-

fœtus, but destructive of its life—and if the forceps fail, the head is to be opened, and its bones comminuted in the customary way.

The last and greatest Arabian author is Albucasis, a distinguished practitioner, who lived in the eleventh or twelfth century. He has particularly described and illustrated by figures numerous obstetric instruments for every imaginable purpose. The most interesting of these are two kinds of forceps, about which, from their being differently represented in different editions of his works, a discrepancy of opinion exists. They are called *misdach* and *almisdach*, and according to some are both of a circular shape and filled with teeth, while others say the *misdach* is straight and armed with teeth, but that the *almisdach* is circular, and calculated to extract without injuring the foetal head. The former opinion is the better supported, and therefore the more probable, and successfully impugns the notion that the Arabians were acquainted with any instruments designed to bring living children into the world.

From the greater strictness with which the oriental nations have ever preserved their women, it is probable that the Arabian accoucheurs were allowed to interfere still less frequently than those of Greece and Rome, in the management of parturition. It would seem that they only gave counsels and directions, and that females, to whom all the precepts contained in their works are addressed, always officiated manually. And this exclusion was not limited to the obstetric branch of surgery—it extended to all the operations connected with the sexual apparatus, and hence Albucasis notes, that one of the greatest obstacles to the success of lithotomy in the female, is the difficulty of finding a *medical woman*, who is competent to perform it. When such is the case, he says that a chaste and prudent medical man should be procured, in whose presence, and by whose directions, the incisions should be made. Surgery in general was held in discredit and contempt by the Arabians, and the operations were left to be performed by slaves, so that a kind of dishonour attached to its exercise—a mis-estimation of which Rhazes in particular bitterly and justly complains.

Though during the period that elapsed from the fall of the western empire to the revival of letters in Europe, the progress of human cultivation was impaired, and knowledge stood still, the communications of the Saracens with the northern shores of the Mediterranean, and their conquests in Spain, could not fail to disseminate what little information they possessed. The Arabian doctrines of medicine were taught in those schools which then existed, and some glimmerings of knowledge were occasionally discernible in the midst of the general obscurity which overspread the earth. The chief of these colleges was that of Salernum, in the south of Italy, founded by Charlemagne, about the year 802, but no writing on midwifery emanated from its precincts at all deserving of notice, excepting a book, "*De Arte Obstetricia*," by a celebrated female, Trotula, who lived some time in the thirteenth century. A book on the diseases of women, dedicated by its author, Priscian, to an eminent midwife named Salviana, appeared in the eighth century, and these two are the only works relating to our subject, which appeared in Europe during the middle ages. From them, in combination with the circumstance recorded by Marcellinus, that an empress once bribed a midwife to slay, by some negative means, the child of a detested rival, we infer that females, during the dismal period referred to, were, as in former times, the principal obstetric practitioners.

On the capture of Constantinople, and the extinction of the eastern empire by the Turks in 1453, learning took its flight back into Europe—the ancient manuscripts were conveyed to their original birth-places, and from the discovery about the same time of the art of printing, a new impulse was given to the minds of men, and facilities were afforded for the acquisition and spread of information, which operated favourably on every branch of knowledge, and on none more than the manual division of the medical art. Like authors on every other subject, these on midwifery now began to increase and multiply, and are so numerous from that period to the present, that it will be possible only to mention the most distinguished—those who by their talents or discoveries, or some

ments not like the forceps of the present time innocuous to the peculiarity of circumstance, have an especial claim to be noticed in this sketch of the history of the art.

It was at this early period that, according to the authority of Haller, the Cæsarian operation was first and successfully performed since its reputed origination; but there are no details given by which to judge of the accuracy or inaccuracy of the report.

Ambrose Paré was born in 1509, and is to be considered one of the first and greatest improvers of the practice of midwifery. He taught that the head presentation alone was natural, and that in every other case the child, after being when necessary turned, should be brought into the world by the feet. The credit, however, of being the first to lay down this valuable precept belongs to Pietro Trauco, the original proposer of the high operation for stone, who distinctly indicates its propriety in all cases of transverse presentation. In many respects the practice of Paré was not different to that recommended by the ancients, whose errors he either had not sufficient discernment to detect, or what is more likely, sufficient courage to expose; for at the time he wrote the prevalent notions, which, like error in general, were adhered to with a tenacity proportioned to their absurdity, were those of Hippocrates and Galen. Even the judicious, but imperfect modifications of practice proposed by Celsus and Moschion were, it is probable, but little attended to, since, in the work of Eucharius Rhodion, published at Frankfort, in 1548, it is stated that when the feet present, attempts should always be made to bring down the head in the natural position, and what is still worse and more gross, this natural position is affirmed to be with the face of the child towards the ossa pubis and abdomen of the mother. The work of Rhodion is otherwise remarkable, as it afforded materials for the first book published in the English language on midwifery, which was by Dr. Raynalde, in the year 1565. He translated from the Latin copy, but informs us that the original of Rhodion was written in Dutch, and had been besides converted into French and Spanish, from which it would appear that it was a book in considerable repute, notwithstanding its disfigurement by

the dangerous absurdities before mentioned. In the latter part of the sixteenth century, much discussion was excited in France by the publication of the work of Rousset, on the operation then for the first time called Cæsarean. Rousset advocates its performance in an ingenious and scientific manner, and relates many cases where it succeeded, but the weight of authority was opposed to him and Paré. Guillemeau, and at a later period, Mauriceau hesitated, from experience of its fatality, to sanction its recommendation.

Guillemeau was born in 1560, and was a disciple of Paré, whose erroneous views he rejected, and whose improvements he adopted, extended, and confirmed. Thus, he directs turning to be performed where there is profuse uterine hæmorrhage, though the labour is natural as far as the infant is concerned, and also when convulsions supervene. Guillemeau was strongly averse to using the erotchet before the death of the fœtus, and was a no less sound than conscientious practitioner; but he seems to have been endued with fastidious delicacy, in wishing to confine the practice of midwifery as much as possible to the *sage femmes*.

The name of the distinguished practitioner in midwifery, which occurs next in the progress of our descent towards the present time, ought never to be pronounced without the profoundest veneration—nor by an Englishman without feelings of pride: it is that of Harvey, who lived, and lived for so many noble purposes, during the first half of the seventeenth century. Of his peculiar opinions on points connected with our present subject, the most singular relates to the cause of parturition. During the whole course of gestation he considers the fœtus to be continually swimming about in the liquor amnii, which at the end of the ninth month, is supposed to acquire some vicious irritating quality, urging and stimulating it to escape from the contact, and compelling it at length to quit its tenement and seek some other abode. It is this attempt at departure, and the resulting movements of progression, which constitute the process of labour. If the fœtus were not an active agent, how, he asks, could it be born during a fit of coma or hysteria, or, as it is

sometimes known to be, after the death of the mother? The position is supported by reference to the analogy offered by the young of birds, who break the shells in which they are confined with their beaks, and to the tediousness of those labours in which the infant is expelled dead. In the latter instance, however, cause and effect are confounded, for the death of the child rather results from, than produces, the unnatural duration of the process. Harvey believed likewise that super-fœtation was possible, and that utero-gestation might be protracted beyond the term of nine months; and is the first medical man of distinction who practised midwifery in this country.

Between 1650 and 1700, lived several eminent accoucheurs, both at home and abroad. In France, Mauriceau, Clément and Peu were the principal.

Mauriceau's writings were fuller than any which had previously appeared, especially on the diseases of females, and contain many excellent suggestions and observations. He invented an instrument to extract the head of the fœtus after it had been opened and emptied, called a "tire-tête," but was ignorant of the forceps. He erred too, in denouncing the Cæsarean operation as an inevitably fatal one, but on the whole is to be deemed an illustrious master in the obstetric art.

Clément was employed secretly to attend the mistresses of Louis the Fourteenth in their accouchemens; to the first of which he was conducted blind-fold, while the king was concealed among the bed curtains, and the face of the lady enveloped in a net-work of lace. The circumstance of these ladies employing Clément, principally contributed to bring male practitioners into fashion—the court hastened to imitate the examples of those who presided over it—the rest of the nobility and gentry were swayed by a practice that came so powerfully recommended to them, and the bourgeois or citizens could be but too happy in adopting or humbly copying any of the usages of their betters. The name of *Accoucheur* was now invented to designate this class of practitioners, whom it became so universally the mode to employ. The contagion of the example

soon spread into neighbouring countries, and the custom, however whimsical or trifling in its origin, or resisted and opposed in its progress, is now generally established, conferring, beyond all doubt, great and daily benefits on the community.

Peu, who comes last in order of the French practitioners of the 17th century, is notable for his aversion to too frequent digital interference during parturition—for his opposition to obstetric operations in general, and for his just discrimination of spurious from real uterine pains.

In England during the latter half of the 17th century, the most famous and successful obstetricians were the Chamberlins, father and three sons, who enjoyed very extensive practice in London, from being in possession of a secret method of expediting delivery in difficult cases, which afterwards turned out to be the forceps. One of the brothers translated Mauriceau's work, and in a note appended to the latter's description of his "tire-tete," declares that his family possessed a better contrivance for the purpose of supplying the suspension of the natural efforts in the expulsion of the head, but what this was, remained unknown till Chapman described the forceps in 1733. Dr. Denman thought their instrument rather a lever than the forceps; but the discovery of the original models about fifteen years since, in a chest concealed beneath the floor of a closet in a mansion where Chamberlin resided in Essex, has shown his supposition to be incorrect. It may be remarked that male practitioners were employed as early in England as in France, and that therefore the usage did not come to us recommended as a foreign novelty, as has been observed in ridicule and depreciation. The introduction of French manners and customs in his court, by Charles the second, in consequence of a partiality derived from long residence on the continent, may have had some influence in causing its adoption; but a more efficient reason must be assigned in the extension of luxury and the progress of refinement and intelligence, which, by rendering females more sensible and susceptible of the precarious and hazardous condition, in which parturition and its sequences place them,

would render them at the same time naturally desirous of securing such assistance as would be competent to avert or remove danger.

The other British authors and practitioners who figured during the epoch under consideration were Culpepper, who published a "Directory for Midwives;" Woolveridge, the title alone of whose work I have been able to find, which is "*Speculum Matris Libernicum*;" a Dr. Salmon, who had a share in the composition of the infamous work now so generally known and circulated among the lower order as Aristotle's: Willoughby, one of whose customs was to affect to liberate an impacted foetal head, by pressing outwards the os eoceygis and manœuvring with two fingers on the back of the pelvis; Thomson; and Jerman, physician to Charles the second.

The chief practitioner of this period on the continent, not French, was the celebrated Dutch anatomist, Ruysch, who expresses himself severely on the conduct of those midwives who precipitately extracted the placenta. He advises that its expulsion should almost always be left to nature.

In briefly mentioning the authors on midwifery after the periods already considered, I will confine myself still more closely to the distinguished among them, rejecting those of ordinary eminence, in order that the tediousness of the recital may be as much as possible diminished.

In 1701, appeared at Leyden, the work of Deventer, exhibiting, as its title page informs us, "a new light to midwives." However that may be, he has so admirably described the causes, consequences, and means of remedying obliquities in the position of the uterus, of which he has likewise given numerous plates, that although allusions to such pathological states are scattered in the writings of the ancient authors, he is come to be considered the earliest as well as best authority on the subject, and that in despite of the sneers of the experienced Smellie.

Lamotte was a French country practitioner of great modesty and excellent judgment, who was largely engaged in midwifery practice during forty years, and published in 1718. He turned in difficult

cases of head presentation when practicable, and so averse was he to the use of instruments, that for thirty years he had recourse to the crotchet but twice. Of the existence of the forceps he does not seem to have been aware.

A new, and since generally adopted method of exerting compression on the uterus, when it refuses to contract, and there is hæmorrhage after delivery, was contained in a pamphlet published in 1722 (but never extensively known), by Dassé, a surgeon-accoucheur of Paris. The method alluded to consists in rolling the abdominal parietes with a due degree of force, in different directions over the uterine surface, so as to bring all the fibres under the stimulus of the pressure.

The first teacher of midwifery in this country lectured in Bondstreet, and was a Dr. Maubray, who lived about the year 1723, and wrote two books, both of which were plentifully and justly abused by the critics of the day. He opposed the use of the forceps, and wished to rectify all malpresentations and accelerate all lingering cases solely by manual means.

De Gorter, who wrote in 1731, deserves notice, as having particularly insisted on the necessity of sufficiently and uniformly supporting the abdomen after the expulsion of the child. He invented and described an under garment proper for the purpose.

The second British teacher of midwifery was Chapman, whose observations were published in 1735. He is the first who depicted and presented to the public the short forceps invented by Chamberlin, and was very partial to their employment, though aware of their inapplicability when the head is situated high in the pelvis. He exclaims strongly and in unmeasured terms against the crotchet, by which many children were, according to his knowledge, murdered. Haller says of Chapman, that he was “*vir bonus, candidus, qui neque nimis sibi tribuit.*”

A Mr. Giffard, whose cases in midwifery were about this time given to the world by Dr. Hody, had been in the habit of using forceps before the invention of Chamberlin was publicly promul-

gated, and if we do not suppose that he obtained private information of its nature, a point to the unravelling of which no clue exists, he must participate in the honor of having been among the first to devise and apply that description of instrument.

Sir Fielding Oulde, of Dublin, gave, in 1742, the first description of the mode of passage of the child's head through the pelvis, and was inventor of a perforating instrument called "*terrebra occulta*," the disqualifying qualities of which are smallness and weakness.

In 1747, a Dutch surgeon-accoucheur communicated to the profession the account of an instrument very famed in Holland, which had been secretly used, and never divulged by its inventor, Roonhuysen. It had however long been in the hands of some other practitioners, though it was known, even after its publication, by the name of "the Roonhuysian secret." This instrument was a simple lever, though of very different construction and dimensions to that now in use.

Levret, who is perhaps the greatest French obstetrician, wrote about this time. He illustrated in a scientific manner the mechanism of parturition, gave ample details on every thing relating to the placenta, the implantation of which over or near the os uteri he was the first to teach, would inevitably produce hæmorrhage, described and distinguished uterine polypi, and invented the long forceps, and other less useful instruments. He is a prolix though valuable writer, and was continually engaged in controversy and dispute.

Röderer, professor of medicine at Gottingen, published the first of numerous obstetric works in 1750. We are indebted to him for a series of good plates of the gravid uterus, and for confirmation of many points of practice of previous doubtful propriety, but he is to be condemned for too great a partiality to the use of instruments, and it is singular, that after all his labours and researches, he should have arrived at the conclusion that the ligature of the umbilical cord was not a necessary measure.

An important era in the history of midwifery is that of Smellie, who joined to very extensive experience, in his time a rare event,

an eminent degree of sagacity and solidity of understanding, rare at all times. The first volume of his work was published in 1751, when he had been many years in practice, both in Scotland and London, and, as he himself informs us, had had more than nine hundred pupils to his lectures, exclusive of females. But he does not mention what Dr. Douglas opprobriously charged him with—the crime of suspending a paper lantern over his door, having legibly inscribed upon it this announcement, “Midwifery taught here for five shillings.” Smellie’s chief merit consists in his having applied the laws of mechanics to the relation between the osseous excavation of the pelvis and the form and mode of passage of the foetal head. From considerations of this kind he deduced improved and safer rules for the application and use of the forceps, which before his time were attached in any way that was possible or most convenient to the operator, and then used forcibly and quite at random. He considerably modified the form and dimensions of Chapman’s forceps, and brought them very near to the common straight short forceps of the present day; and likewise altered advantageously the perforating scissors used in craniotomy, by giving them a projecting rest, calculated to limit the extent of their introduction. The plates he published have served as models for all that have appeared since, either in this or foreign countries.

Contemporary with Smellie was Dr. Burton of York, the original of Sterne’s Dr. Slop. He was a skilful accoucheur, tainted with the foible common to many of his predecessors as well as successors, of being too fond of employing instruments. Besides a treatise on midwifery, Burton published a virulent letter, criticising and condemning most of Smellie’s opinions and directions, which was answered by Dr. Watt, in his “Reflections on Slow and Painful Labours.” It is worth remarking of this latter publication, that the cause of tedious labour is held to be want of irritation in the orifice of the uterus—an idea that in our own times has been assumed as original and propounded so ostentatiously by Dr. Power.

Smellie's opponents were not limited to his medical brethren, for, in 1760, a most violent diatribe against him and all other accoucheurs, was issued by a Mrs. Nicol, the follies and impertinencies of which proved a complete antidote to the effect intended to be produced; and though at the time the book was extolled as prodigiously clever, and was translated into French, it is now unheard of, and unknown.

As the practice of midwifery since the time of Smellie, has been principally in the hands of the medical profession, writings on it after this date, become more numerous and frequent. To enumerate these, would be a tiresome task; but to indicate the new suggestions they contain, to point out their merits and defects, and to give even the succinct account of them that has been presented, of the older writers on the art, of those who assisted it in its infancy, and laboured by their assiduity, and from their conviction of its importance to the good of mankind, to enlarge its narrow boundaries, and extend the sphere of its operations and benefits, when these were circumscribed by prejudice and ignorance, and restricted by a spurious and even cruel moral code; to lay before you, gentlemen, equally brief particulars of the improvements of more recent and living authors, would be, as well as an unwarrantable trespass on your patience and time, to exceed the limits of my present design, whose object has been to trace the steps by which midwifery has risen from a neglected, to the state of a cultivated art, and has emerged from a degraded to the level of an ennobling, because an inestimably useful pursuit. Having brought the account of it down to the period of its admission among the legitimate objects of preliminary pursuit, and of its practice having become to many members of the profession an affair of primary attention and care, I am not solicitous to continue its history up to the present moment. A reference, however, to the existing condition, and some of the more recent triumphs of the art, and a slight demonstration of its dignity and utility, will be neither superfluous nor misplaced.

Passing, then, over the names of the illustrious and judicious William Hunter, of whose discernment and industry we possess such splendid relics; of the sophistical and ingenious, but misjudging Osborne; of the benevolent, candid, and cautious Denman; of Rigby, whom fruitful experience and well-directed labour enabled to worthily fill up an important void in obstetric literature; and lastly, of the morbidly sensitive and eminently intellectual Gooch, whose premature loss science must ever deplore; passing over, I say, this array of bright and honoured names, and arriving in the midst of the living, coming to consider the art as it actually is known and taught, what is the spectacle this branch of medical science exhibits? What are its claims on the philanthropist's applause, the legislature's protection, the possession of public esteem? It may be unhesitatingly affirmed, that he who is merely a well-wisher to the progress of human improvement, will be as gratified and delighted as the cultivator of science, when he looks around him and contemplates, though cursorily, the approaches to perfection which it has attained; and that on every rightly constituted mind, it has as powerful claims for regard, and as just a title to consideration, as it has on legislative and corporate bodies for fostering and support. Connected, as a discharge of its duties is, with the most sacred earthly interests of society, and the nearest ties of domestic attachment, can there be a doubt that its cultivation should be recommended, urged, nay enforced? And yet so far from this having been the case, it is well known, that until within a few months previous to the urgent remonstrances and forcible representations of the obstetric society formed in London, none of the corporate medical bodies of this kingdom exacted any knowledge of its principles from their candidates. While, in other countries, no person, either male or female, can undertake the practice of midwifery without examination and licence, in this there is no law or restriction to prevent the most ignorant from assuming it. Two of the chartered institutions of the metropolis do certainly now require certificates, but to this equivocal demand the guarantees to society, that unqualified and improper persons shall not be let loose upon

them are limited; no inquiry into the proficiency of the candidate is instituted, and the consequence is, that the study, not being compulsory, is too often either totally neglected, or but very carelessly and indifferently pursued. When so lamentable a state of things is considered; and that it is lamentable, must surely force itself on the conviction of any one who looks at the question without bias or prejudice, and examines it solely on the broad principle of general utility and public expediency; it is almost impossible to suppress our rising feelings of indignation at the supine conduct of those privileged and dignified bodies, who have been entrusted with so much power, but have exerted their control to the effecting only of such partial good. But I must request your excuse, gentlemen, of this digression, while I intreat you to allow the importance of the subject to justify the irrelevancy of its introduction in this place.

The existing condition of midwifery in this country, was about to be glanced at. The achievements of modern obstetricians have unquestionably been rather of a negative than a positive kind, but they are not on that account the less worthy of admiration, the less indicative of ability, or the less momentous to the welfare of the community. To remove the accumulated rubbish of ages, flanked and fortified by hereditary and almost intuitive prejudices, and by clearing it away, to reduce the practice of an art to clear and definite rules, requires no ordinary merit and no common capacity. The efforts and labours of most of the professors of midwifery, during the last half century, have been directed to the simplification of its practice; to the abolition of absurd and pernicious customs; and to the diminution of necessity for instrumental aid. They have comprehended nature, whose intentions, when salutary and beneficial, the older practitioners did but too frequently thwart and oppose; they have inculcated that knowledge, and by precept as well as example, recommended a close study of the natural operations, injudiciously disregarded, because they *were* natural and simple, not only as the surest means of understanding and appreciating deviations from them, but also as affording the best lessons against that officiousness and

meddlesome intrusion, which are so often practised, and as generally resented by some untoward and harassing occurrence. If, as is universally agreed upon among the reflecting and honest, the production of reform in other sciences and on other subjects, involves numerous points of difficult and delicate consideration, and requires to be approached on the one hand without rashness or presumption, and on the other, with uncompromising vigour and resolution; why should the merit of having effected a salutary change in the practice of midwifery be depreciated? Why should the honour of having judiciously rejected, cautiously but decidedly deviated, not unsparingly nor yet unreasonably condemned, be denied to the teachers of its doctrines and rules? It would be neither invidious with respect to others, nor adulatory with respect to the individual, to assert that the precepts of the eminent professor of midwifery in the University of Edinburgh, have contributed in an especial degree to induce this revolution. That patriarchal practitioner has most certainly exerted an important influence by means of his admirable prælections on the modes of practice throughout the empire, and has assisted, not in a secondary manner, in maintaining the lustre and upholding the high character of the renowned institution to which he belongs.

The sound opinions, the results of mature reflection and personal observation, which characterize the writings of professor Burns, are to be estimated in a no less valuable light, as bearing the impress of that diligence in observing, and care in weighing facts, and that sobriety in forming deductions from them, which every disciple of our art should study, assiduously and unceasingly to imitate.

Nor should the quaint and plain-spoken Dewees be forgotten, in an enumeration of living men of eminence. The vein of strong original good sense which runs through his works, and the independent, unprejudiced spirit of observation which has dictated his effusions, and guided his pen, render his works prominent and honorable specimens of the improved state of practice which now prevails.

But let it not be inferred, that the results of the zealous labours and active ingenuity of modern practitioners, have induced none but

negative improvements ; for the reverse obtains, and the fact is far otherwise. Physiology and surgery have shed two of the most brilliant rays on obstetric subjects, and have supplied, from their fertile and constantly enlarging sources, remedial means which it has been the office of the obstetrician to apply successfully to the alleviation of human suffering and distress. Through the assistance of one, by which I would allude to the revived operation of transfusion, effects the most marvellous and gladdening have been produced. By its aid, the tottering and flickering spark of vitality, ready finally to depart from the frame which it animated, has been restored to stability and permanence ; its flight has been arrested, and its faint expiring glow at first gently supported, and afterwards fanned by degrees, into the full flame of life, and vigour, and joy. When all has seemed desperate, and death was apparently on the point of receiving his victim, when the powers of life have been drained, and its energies were about to succumb, by the influence of this wonderful remedy, the whole scene has been changed, the almost vanquished sufferer has been snatched from the jaws of death, to which she seemed inevitably doomed, and rescued from the brink of destruction, on whose verge she was trembling ; distressed relatives, spared the infliction of the pangs and wretchedness hovering around and threatening them, have been brought back to consolation and hope, and the house of mourning has suddenly been transformed into the house of gratitude and delight. Such is an outline of the benefits promised and afforded by timely recourse to transfusion ; how illustrious, then, ought its second inventor to be considered ; how distinguished his name among those of the benefactors of mankind ; how proud may not that science justly be, which numbers a Blundell among her votaries, and can claim him for her own.

The other important suggestion flowing from an enlightened surgery, and adapted to the relief of one of the most distressing maladies to which human nature is liable, is the removal, either totally or in part, of the womb. The honour of the origination of this great and terrible operation is not due to any of our countrymen, neither to any

of our rival neighbours, but to the distinguished German, Ossiander ; and though the question of its expediency has been somewhat acrimoniously discussed, and by many its performance is considered unjustifiable under any circumstances, there is on record in the annals of medicine, both at home and in other countries, a sufficient number of successful cases to render it a feasible, and sometimes even an imperative step, on the part of the practitioner. Indiscriminately performed, it would deserve the strongest reprehension, and prove a greater bane and curse than the formidable disease, whose ravages it is intended to stay ; but resorted to in select instances, it is capable of answering the desired end of relief, which, previous to its introduction, was never attained, and, from the utter inefficiency of all known remedies, had come to be considered hopeless and unattainable. Surely it is better to make an attempt to rescue a sufferer from a state of misery, than to rest satisfied with fruitlessly lamenting and idly deploring the inadequacy of the resources of art ; and as surely must it be preferable to submit to a temporary increase of pain, with the prospect of future exemption and a chance of recovery, than to linger slowly onwards with accumulating distress to a certainly fatal and deplorable termination. When the proposal shall have been long and calmly considered, there is every probability that its adoption will be extended ; and by putting it in practice at a sufficiently early period of the disease, and in well-adapted constitutions, which are probably of more frequent occurrence than has been commonly believed, it will not be predicated too much, or at all sanguinely, of this operation, to assert that it will be instrumental in rescuing many lives, that are now resigned into the unavailing hands of nature, from a series of tortures and painful endurancees, the most exquisite perhaps, and the most intense, to which the flesh is heir.

It would be improper to close this historical outline of our subject, without paying a merited tribute to the mode in which midwifery is cultivated, and the advances it has made towards perfection, in France. A host of eminent names immediately crowds upon the view, when the attention is turned towards those who have recently professed, or

are now professing it, in that country. Such men as Baudelocque, Gardien, Capuron, Chambon, Dugès, Velpeau, and Dubois would reflect light and credit on any science; and it has been the good fortune of this department of our own to receive the concentrated and unwearied attention of their powerful and ingenious minds. The results are well known to the world, and the refined state into which the theoretical and mechanical parts of French midwifery have been brought, needs not to be here explained or dwelt upon with praise.

To this consecutive view of the rise, progress, and existing condition of the obstetric art, an account of some of the usages and ceremonies connected with it in different ages and among different people of the world, and a sketch of its domestic history will not, it is hoped, be considered a useless or uninteresting addition.

Among the Jews, it appears that a woman kept her chamber forty days after having given birth to a boy, and eighty days when to a girl; and that at the expiration of the term, she carried to the temple a lamb and a turtle-dove, or if very poor, only two pigeons. One of these pigeons or the lamb, it was customary for the priest to sacrifice, and to receive its blood in an earthen vessel, containing pure water; then to dip in the other pigeon or the dove, to make seven aspersions over the woman, and after having declared her clean and pure, to give the bird its liberty.

The formal customs of the Greeks and Romans were numerous, both before and after, as well as during parturition, and many of them superstitious and most absurd. From there being many privileges and honours which fathers alone, and frequently those only who had three children, were allowed to enjoy, such as were exemption from the taxes and burdens of the state, eligibility to offices of dignity and trust, the right of place and precedence in assemblies of the people, and the capability of receiving legacies and succeeding to inheritances, from which the unmarried and childless were, without special commission, excluded—wives were anxiously desirous of offspring, and not only on their husbands', but also on their own accounts, for when they did not conceive, they were not uncommonly

repudiated, and never were considered to have legitimate claims on the respect and fidelity of their lords. When, therefore, in the common course of events, pregnancy did not follow marriage, extraordinary methods of exciting it, were had recourse to, and no means believed to possess any efficacy, were left untried or unexerted. Prayers to Venus Genitrix and other deities, the use of particular herbs and plants, incantations and magic recitations, and practices less innocent and foolish, if we may credit the allusions of some of the poets, were diligently employed. By far the most useful plan, and efficient stimulant, however, was believed to be that of receiving flagellation from the Lupercalian priests in the temple of the god Pan. Those ladies who could not have children, were accustomed to resort there at stated hours, and after being stripped of their vestments, and devoutly prostrating themselves, received a certain number of lashes, administered by the priest, with thongs made of the hide of goats. There were annual feasts indeed, called *Lupercaliæ*, celebrated for the same purpose, and during their continuance, the priests ran through the city, applying their divine remedy unsparingly on the bodies of such women as wished to become prolific; and these monstrous disgusting ceremonies were not abolished in Rome till nearly 500 years after the birth of Christ. As soon as impregnation had taken place, it was the custom, more particularly among the Grecian women, to hang up their zone or girdle in the temple of Diana, in testimony both of their gratitude and of its future uselessness. During the term of gestation, it seems that their lives were not merely more sedentary than usual, but that they passed great part of the period in bed. We read, however, that a fashionable kind of exercise was that of riding out on mares in foal. The diet was regulated on a most systematic plan: salt and cold water were articles to be sedulously avoided; and snails, cabbages, pomegranate bark, and infusion of dictamnus were strongly recommended, largely used, and held in great repute, no less on account of their conservative than their prophylactic virtues. The sacrifice most usually offered at this period, was that of a dog, by the Greeks to Hecate, and by the Romans to Geneta, whom it was

intended to propitiate, so that the child might be soon and easily born, and without any blemish or malformation. The deference paid by the laws to women in a state of utero-gestation, when accused of any violation of them, was still greater and more humane than what at present obtains among us; for, not only was punishment deferred, but even questioning and examination were postponed. When the hour of confinement drew nigh, the apartment which every respectable house contained, expressly allotted for the reception of its mistress, under these circumstances, was unlocked by the key, of which the husband was esteemed the right possessor, and the lady, after being ceremoniously ushered in, was disrobed, and clad in a plainer and slighter dress. The couch used, was one of as much magnificence and as costly as the condition of the parties would allow, and was called *lectus genialis*, being probably the same with the nuptial bed. While labour was proceeding, several important observances were to be attended to. Thus the presence of a person in the house, with the legs or fingers crossed, was thought to oppose an almost invincible obstacle to delivery; and various medicaments were applied to, and swallowed by the woman. Now also the tutelar deities were invoked: Juno Lucina, represented as a middle-aged female, with one hand empty as if to receive the child, and holding a torch in the other, to denote the severity of the pains of labour; and Diana, who was likewise called Illythia, were called upon thrice with a loud voice, and had offered to them sacrifices of twin-lambs: if the process was tedious and laborious, or there was suspicion of twins, the *Dü nixi*, the only masculine deities ever appealed to on these occasions, and who were embodied in the shape of three figures kneeling before the chair of Minerva in the Capitol, as if presiding over the parturient efforts, were imprecated for assistance, with uncovered head and washed hands: and if the feet were discovered to be the presenting part, sacrifices were made to the goddesses Postversa or Antevorta. The reason of Diana being solicited for aid, and of being thought capable of facilitating delivery, was derived from the circumstances of her own birth. When Latona, persecuted by the malice

and jealousy of Juno, came at last to be seized with the pains of labour in the isle of Delos, she had no other support but that afforded by leaning against a palm-tree, until Diana, by being first expelled, rendered the subsequent birth of her twin-brother Apollo easier. On this trivial physiological incident, was built the custom of imploring her succour and assistance by parturient women. If the child happened to be born with the membranes entire, enveloping its head after the fashion of a hood, it was considered that good fortune would always attend it through life, so long as it retained possession of the precious covering, and carried it about its person ; a superstition, which probably arose from Antcnius Diadumenus, who was so named from that circumstance of his birth, having afterwards attained to the empire. But the midwives were in the habit of taking them by stealth as often as they could do so unobserved, and of selling them to the advocates by whom their proeural was much coveted, as it was supposed greatly to enhance their powers of oratory and forensic success. The superstitions on this head, as far as relates to the proprietor being fortunate, has descended to the present time, and is still entertained among the vulgar ; but instead of advocates, seamen desire to be possessed of this safeguard, which is believed to afford perfect immunity against shipwreck and other casualties of the deep.

When the infant bore a strong resemblance to the father, and prayers to the effect that it might were diligently put up during the whole course of gestation, it was deemed honourable to the mother, and an indubitable proof of her chastity. After delivery, the woman consecrated her garments to Diana, the universal patroness ; and on the fifth day, when it was customary to dismiss the midwife, was celebrated the feast of Baths or of Purification, in which all who had taken any part, or officiated in any way during the labour, were accustomed to undergo thorough and repeated ablution. Then presents were accepted from friends and acquaintance, and were offered, not to the child and mother only, but likewise to the slaves and attendants, and were repeated afterwards on the kalends of March, when the ceremony of naming the infant was performed. During

the whole of the second week, a table was spread in honour of Juno, and on it the newly born child was devoted and recommended to the gods, with reiteration and redoubling of all the vows made previous to its birth. Afterwards altars and statues were frequently raised, and medals struck in honour of the goddess Fecundity; and the solemnities were terminated by feasts and spectacles, on a scale of extravagance and grandeur proportioned to the circumstances of the parents.

Of the ceremonial observances of other people, whether savage or civilized, ancient or modern, neighbouring or remote,—but little needs to be, or can be said. Some of them are strikingly similar to those of the Romans, though the communication between the two people can have been only circuitous and intermediate, and no corresponding traces exist among the people through whom the transmission must have taken place.* Some of the customs are inexplicably ridiculous, such is that prevailing in former times among the inhabitants of Corsica and Spain, and at present among the Caribs and native Brazilians, of the husband taking the place of his wife immediately after delivery, and receiving all the medical attendance, and complimentary visits of friends: other are barbarous and unnatural, as is that observed in the island of Formosa, of not allowing a woman to bear a living child before the age of thirty-five; and others again are only excesses of what is conformable to reason and right feeling, of which the reverential regard of pregnant women, tending to invest them with an almost sacred

* Such is the Hippocratic custom alluded to by Brooke (*Winter in Ireland*, 1827), in the following words:—"I have been assured that to ease the woman in child-birth, the singular expedient is sometimes put in practice of *shaking* her, which they suppose will facilitate the delivery." Speaking of the Cree Indians, Dr. Richardson (see his account of that tribe in Franklin's *Narrative*, &c. 1823) observes of the female, that "she lives apart from her husband also for two months if she has borne a boy, and for three if she has given birth to a girl." This relative length of time, corresponds in a great measure to that observed, as has been already mentioned, by the ancient Israelites. Other equally remarkable coincidences of this kind might be adduced.

character, by the ancient Hungarians and the Carthaginians, is a conspicuous instance.

Researches of this kind, however, may not unfairly be thought incapable of supplying materials for any useful deduction or reflection; for if the records and remains of enlightened nations are, in these innovating times, scarcely thought to possess worthy attractions for the minds of citizens of the world, the annals of nations sunk in the depths of ignorance and darkness, must *a fortiori*, be more truly deserving of neglect and contempt.

Quitting retrospective relation, therefore, I have next to offer, principally to the younger portion of my hearers, some remarks on the qualifications and duties of the obstetric practitioner—a subject to them of both present and future import, but like most of the subsidiary branches of medical education in this country, strangely unattended to, and, in consequence, imperfectly estimated.

After the luminous exposition of the duties incumbent on medical men in their various social relations, which on a recent occasion was so ably unfolded in this place by my friend and colleague,* it were a work of supererogation in me to attempt to further define or elucidate them. But some special remarks on the ethical conduct, which it is within the province of the accoucheur peculiarly to adopt, and his duty no less than his interest to rigidly maintain, together with a few observations on what should be the object of an obstetric teacher, I will beg permission to introduce. To communicate distinct ideas to the minds of others, it is first necessary that a teacher should clearly perceive the agreement or disagreement of his own. Without this perception of the congruity or incongruity of the particular notions, or classes of notions, which are present to his understanding, he will not only be affected with inability to impart definite and precise ideas to the understandings of his hearers, but there will also be a mental confu-

* Dr. Hunter Lane, Lecturer on the Theory and Practice of Medicine, and on Medical Jurisprudence.

sion and intellectual disorder, tantamount to, if not identical with, a deficiency and absence of knowledge. The teacher then is to endeavour to form as large a number as possible of distinct and separate ideas on the subjects he proposes to explain, and with this possession should bend all his efforts to obtain the means of communicating them in such a manner as may be least fatiguing and most agreeable to his listeners. For this purpose the endowments and qualifications derived from nature have been always found of most avail, but art and industry are also capable of effecting much, and a series of persevering and well-directed attempts, if they will not make a man an orator, may at all events be expected to enable him to discourse fluently and profitably. In the purely obstetrical part of this course it will be my constant endeavour to impress principles and elements on the minds of students,—to lay down general rules, unburdened by rare and possible exceptions,—to expose carefully and repeatedly, and dwell amply on parturition, considered as a *function* of the animal frame,—and to analyse and arrive at the roots and reasons of phenomena, without entering into laboured or hypothetical disquisitions, calculated only to embarrass and perplex. The surest basis and solidest foundation of knowledge to rest upon, and for instruction therefore to proceed from, is justly esteemed to be that of *experience*, and yet it may be doubted whether the experience of any individual can have been sufficiently complete to allow him, in teaching, to do justice to a department of medicine, or to illustrate it on the sole grounds of personal observation—from those sources and facts only, that have been by him personally examined, and fully verified. It is to be hoped indeed, that the time is gone by when an individual shall be found giving instructions on a subject with which he has never been practically conversant, as has happened more than once in regard to midwifery; and it is as devoutly to be hoped that the claims of mere experience—by which I mean to indicate the barren, profitless, routine exercise of an art for any number of years—will never be considered as necessarily including a philosophical knowledge of the subject. Were it so, there are numberless matrons who would

be entitled to rank with the Hamiltons, Blundells, and Gooches, who have adorned this department of the healing art. Experience, which is equivalent to wisdom, is, like it, gained not by years, but by hours, and will be more or less abundantly collected in the practice of medicine, as the mental powers have received early and preliminary discipline, and have been fashioned and adapted by education and philosophy. Though the natural abilities and the opportunities of acquiring knowledge be, in any given case equal, the progress made will be different—depending on the preparatory culture of the mind, and its modelling by the liberal hand of general science and literature. Where the intellect has been nourished and expanded, and the ideas have been elevated and refined by the genial and inspiring influence of classical literature, and the powers of reasoning and judging have been amplified and rendered exact by assiduous addiction to the more severe mathematical pursuits, the individual will be in a state to derive the fullest benefit from the lessons of experience; he will know how to appreciate facts, how to combine and separate them, and how to deduce from them morsels of knowledge and truth. But, on the other hand, where the mind has never been enriched by acquaintance with the treasures of antiquity, nor exercised on objects of lofty research, where neither the powers of observation have been trained, nor a habit of comparing ideas and ascertaining their relations or dissimilarities has been formed, experience will be comparatively useless, and devoid of advantage. Time will have flowed away—years may have rolled by, but little or no advance will be made by such an individual in the path of knowledge and truth; he has remained stationary by the way, has trodden indeed the surface of mines where vast and indefinite stores lie concealed, but has never descended into their depths for the purpose of exploring and scrutinizing, and dragging forth their riches to the day. Experience, therefore, so far from being, as some interested persons would persuade us, of absolute value, is of all gifts and advantages the most *relative*; and though when engrafted on previous philosophical culture in powerful or enquiring minds, it ought ever to meet with

the veneration and deference of the young, it nevertheless when associated with original emptiness and incapacity, or thrust forwards unscrupulously with arrogant and monopolising intentions, loses all title to confidence and respect, and deserves to be held in utter disregard. But, as far as the teacher of a branch of medicine is concerned, even the most unexceptionable and extensive experience ought not to be relied upon to the exclusion of the knowledge and rejection of the testimony of others: on the contrary, it is his duty to draw largely on the results of their experience, to balance and contrast their conclusions with his own, and to lay under contribution every important writing on the subject of which he treats. The less experienced must without doubt have greater occasion to collate, and greater difficulty in discriminating than the more experienced: but the precepts of both should be similarly derived, and should issue, purged of error and dross, from the crucible into which their personal knowledge, and the results of the labours of others, have been unitedly cast. From this continual necessity of making references and comparisons it is, that the task of a conscientious instructor becomes one of much labour and responsibility, and imposes great additional cares to the disquietudes of professional occupation. It was recommended by a fascinating teacher, the late Dr. Gooch, to early reject the assistance of books, and to depend rather on unsophisticated diligent observation, which is in accordance with Baglivi's famed axiom, "*Ars medica tota est in observationibus*:" but there is danger in the precept, and laid down without restriction or limitation, it is liable to prove mischievous and pernicious, by making persons of all intellectual grades and capabilities fancy that reading may be safely and wisely dispensed with. Some gigantic minds there are certainly which cannot stoop to collect, and will not brook to listen to the suggestions of humbler heads; minds which seem to acquire knowledge intuitively, and to grasp without effort the most extensive ranges of human contemplation; but these are rare solitary beings, special creations, to mimic whom is as easy and common as to rival successfully is difficult and uncommon; and the multitude

are not to take refuge under their example, or be incited to imitate their proud career.

The duties of practical obstetricians are next to engage our attention. In the practice of midwifery as of any other branch of the profession, much that is unpleasant and trying to the feelings occurs, disgusts may occasionally, and especially at the onset be encountered, and the body as well as the mind is peculiarly exposed to fatigue, and is obnoxious to oppressive and exhausting labours. But it should be the earnest aim of the accoucheur never to suffer his mental energies to flag, nor his perceptions to be blunted or obscured; he must ever remain perfectly alive to the importance of the trust confided to his hands, and to the sacredness of the interests at stake: his resources must be clearly arranged, and ready to be applied on sudden and alarming emergencies, with the utmost steadiness and the most unruffled composure; no formidable contingency should embarrass him; no infirmity of purpose interfere to deprive his patient of the most potent and prompt means of relief; he must control his own mind and feelings too before assuming the direction of others, and grapple with the difficulties and dangers, starting up and spreading dismay around him, serene and resolved, without perturbation or fear. Calmness and decision are never to forsake him, however menacing the circumstance, he is called on to remedy; uninfluenced alike by the agitation and terrors of surrounding friends, and the desperate nature of the morbid occurrence, he is, when at the bed-side, to investigate speedily, yet not precipitately, and as soon as the source of danger is detected, to select from his abundant store of knowledge, and apply with vigour and perseverance, the most appropriate and judicious means of preservation. Whatever may be the opinion concerning the general facility of the practice of midwifery, and the want of occasion for the display of profound medical skill which attends even extensive engagement in its duties, it is certain that the untoward accidents which do occur are of the most appalling and hazardous description, and frequently bring the existence of the most interesting class of

sufferers, with whom our art is conversant, into jeopardy and imminent peril. If, therefore, the highest and sublimest object of medicine, in respect of the facility or difficulty of application of its precepts, is the preservation of the lives of our fellow-creatures, and if the obstetric branch is exclusively devoted to save those whose existence is inestimably valuable or pre-eminently dear—if the objects of its exercise are wives, sisters, mothers of families, may it not challenge comparison for importance and usefulness with the more abstruse and obscure departments of medicine? Does it not even possess a leading claim on the attention of the medical student, and can excellence on any other subdivision of the healing art, compensate, generally speaking, for deficiency in this? Let the testimony of many of the experienced practitioners whom I have now the honour to address declare; let reason or policy dictate a reply.

Other qualifications, besides accurate and well assorted knowledge, and a large share of nerve and resolution, are indispensable to the practice of midwifery, either with comfort to the patient or pleasure to ourselves. The address, and voice, and manner, should be regulated and softened, in consideration of the greater weakness and susceptibility of the sex, but should, at the same time, be as remote from effeminacy and affectation, as from boisterousness and coarseness. The deportment, too, should be free from both solemnity and levity; from pompousness or flippancy; and the golden mean of affability without servility, and of sedateness without gravity, should studiously but also without apparent effort, be preserved. Rectitude of principle, joined with sensibility of feeling, will be the best instigators of delicacy and decorum, as well as of gentleness and politeness, in the discharge of unpleasing professional duty. The manner, on such occasions, should display no stiffness or embarrassment, and should be entirely divested of all gaiety and inconsideracy. To take advantage of the exposed situation of a patient, however humble her condition, in order to infringe in any degree upon the rules of delicacy, or to offend the susceptibility and modesty which are inherent to the female mind, would be as cruel as dishonourable. A mere dereliction

from propriety in this respect, deserves to be stigmatized with severe censure ; but of the higher grades of iniquitous commission, and the viler breaches of professional confidence, of which, not less to the disgrace of the individuals than to the discredit of the order, instances have been recently brought before the public eye, it would not be easy to speak in terms too contemptuous or condemnatory. The obligation to inviolable secrecy is also peculiarly a duty of the obstetric practitioner. Every disclosure ought to be regarded as confidential, every deposit as sealed ; and even trifling circumstances should not be wantonly divulged. Hence arises the importance of being habitually circumspect in conversation, and of setting a guard over the words and actions, that it may not be imperceptibly inferred that an individual is incapable of preserving communications inviolate, or unworthy to be admitted and trusted in the bosom of families. Interest, indeed, where the observance does not flow spontaneously from a pure and virtuous mind, may render the conduct irreproachable ; but it is better that it should spring from higher and less fallacious sources, and that the habit of acting honorably and discreetly, and of behaving humanely, should be rather natural than assumed.

A knowledge, in detail, of the human heart, and of the petty springs and passions which operate in modifying the occurrences of every-day life, will aid the obstetric, more materially perhaps than any other, practitioner. He will often have occasion to indulge the peevishness and caprices of patients, and seemingly to humour their whims and comply with their fancies, in order to secure the attainment of an essential end, the direct means of arriving at which might, if made known, excite aversion, and be met by a fatal objection. Let him, on this account, therefore, study the art of persuasion, and if he fail by its judicious employment, let him learn how to expostulate and admonish, without overstepping the bounds of propriety and forbearance. But let him, on all occasions, be careful not to lose command of his own temper, or swerve from equanimity ; for, in proportion as he does so, will the obstinacy of the recusant increase, and be led to

terminate, perhaps, both in rejection of the remedial plan and dismissal of its proposer.

Let me venture, in the last place, to exhort the younger part of my audience, and especially those who are studying, or intend to study the principles of their profession in this school, to persevere unceasingly, and to exert themselves ardently in the acquisition of knowledge, as well for the sake of its abstract beauty, as for the tone of elevation and dignity it imparts to the mind, and its advantages in promoting worldly views: let it not be said, that medicine is the only science which refuses to cede to the impulse, which in these days, has been impressed on every noble pursuit, and least of all, that any institution of this flourishing and important town is backward or slow in contributing to diffuse, if not to add to, the sum of what is already known. I hope, on the contrary, that all the pupils of this school will endeavour, by strenuous industry, unwearied diligence, and in a spirit of generous emulation, both to enlarge and adorn their own minds, and to reflect credit on their teachers who strive to point out and direct them in the way of improvement; so will they bid fair to have their names inrolled among those which will never fade; thus only can they hope to become, and be acknowledged benefactors of the human race; or at least, can certainly possess the consolatory reflection that they have, without being presumptuous, made just and worthy use of those abilities and faculties which Providence has assigned to their share.

If by the mite of my endeavours, I can excite the latent enthusiasm of one breast, or, by concurrent labour, can facilitate to any one the attainment of the facts of which he is in search, I shall esteem myself sufficiently rewarded. The consciousness of not labouring in vain will prove a powerful inducement for me to continue, by humble and zealous efforts, in conjunction with the more efficient ability of my colleagues, to attempt to place this establishment on a footing which shall deserve the applause and support of our medical and surgical brethren at large, and constrain the respect of the rival few, whom envy or a hatred of independence

may have precipitated into ungenerous hostility or contemptuous disregard.

In conclusion, gentlemen, it remains for me only to tender you my very sincere thanks for the patient attention with which you have listened to me, and to assure you of my earnest desire to cultivate your good opinion, and maintain the elevated character of our profession. Believe that I am deeply and gratefully sensible of the kindness and consideration you have manifested during this long and desultory discourse.

F I N I S.

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